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## [Albany's 6th Legislative District race takes shape \(again\)](#)

June 17, 2011 at 10:53 am by [Jordan Carleo-Evangelist, Staff Writer](#)

What with [the new district lines](#) and all, the race for Albany County's 6th Legislative District seat currently held by Democrat Brian Scavo was an utter mess at this time last month.

Back from a two-week political hiatus, I hope to be able to bring some clarity to the situation here.

Three Democrats — Scavo, Noelle Kinsch and Janis Gonzalez — are out collecting signatures to get on the ballot.

Kinsch, you may recall, was initially redistricted out of [the district off](#) of Delaware and New Scotland avenues but later returned to the fold when the maps were amended.

That prompted a fourth Democrat, Maureen O'Brien, who had been campaigning to succeed 1st District Legislator George Infante before the 1st District was effectively eliminated and she was moved into the 6th, to drop out of the race.

In an open letter on Facebook (full text below the jump) and in an interview, O'Brien said she made her decision in consultation with Kinsch. O'Brien said the reality was that Kinsch had already done more work campaigning inside the lines of the new district and that the two of them wanted to avoid opening a rift in the progressive wing of the Democratic Party like the one caused by the dueling 2009 mayoral campaigns of Shawn Morris and Corey Ellis.

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O'Brien wrote:

*"I would ... like to take this opportunity to call on the progressive Democratic community to come together. Someone from my past, Sister Margaret Collins, whom I greatly admired used to talk about people "pushing on bruises" rather than letting them heal. There's been a lot of "bruise pushing" from both the Ellis and Morris camps from the last mayoral campaign. No one was all right. No one was all wrong. Life is not that simple. It's time to end it and work together. Hopefully, what Noelle and I have done can be an example."*

A significant concern among some progressive Democrats in the district is that a divided opposition would only pave the way for Scavo's re-election. Keep in mind here that even the Democratic establishment in the district, back in April when it was still the 7th District, endorsed Kinsch. Kinsch, an attorney, also has the endorsements of the Independence and Working Families parties and says she's already collected enough signatures to get on the ballot.

Gonzalez has been the quietest candidate so far, but in an email Thursday confirmed that she has been out gathering signatures to get on the ballot, too.

She wrote:

*"Voters are making it very clear to me that they want change and they don't want Brian Scavo. They also know that my all-inclusive neighborly approach to governing is the perfect direction and course that we must take as a district, and we must no longer allow the County to balance its budget on the backs of the most vulnerable."*

*I continue in this process with intent to raise the voices of the disadvantaged and struggling working families, all suffering greatly from a lack of representation. In the end, voters will sort it all out, and every person in the district will have an opportunity to decide it's next four years."*

*With Noelle in the race too, Brian is being boxed in, and he knows it."*

**Update:** Worth noting here is that, until last month when the new lines were released, Gonzalez — like O'Brien — actually lived in the 1st District. Gonzalez would not have known she lived in the 6th District until late last month.

Some might argue, however, that Scavo could actually benefit from having two Democratic challengers — both of them women, at that.

So there you have it. That's where things stand, until — of course — they change again.

Read below for the full text of O'Brien's letter.

*Dear Friends,*

*As many of you know, I announced this past winter that I was running for the Albany County Legislature in the First Legislative District (LD) because our long-time legislator, George Infante, was retiring. I was running because I feel strongly about mental health and health care issues that impact on the people not only in this*



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*legislative district, but in the county as a whole; which include long-term care of both the elderly and people with disabilities. I also felt that I was bringing LGBT presence to the county legislature, which has been lacking in the last few years.*

*Since that time there have been significant changes due to redistricting process and the first legislative district as we knew it no longer exists. As a result, I no longer reside in that district. I was gerrymandered into the district with Noelle Kinsch who announced her candidacy against Brian Scavo, the incumbent, back in January. There are now a number of other candidates running in that district including Noelle Kinsch and Brian Scavo. After many meetings and conversations with my supporters and Noelle, I have decided that it is not in anyone's best interest for both of us to run and I am withdrawing my name from this race. More than anything, Mr. Scavo must be replaced with a competent legislator who is capable of representing the people. Having both of us in this race would split the vote and enable Scavo to win.*

*I believe that Noelle can win this race. She is a strong candidate with progressive ideas and views. She has been working on this race for over a year, and while that in and of itself isn't reason to not run, it serves no good purpose to see Brian Scavo in that seat for another four years. Splitting the vote would likely do that. I encourage the others who are running in that race to throw their support behind Noelle Kinsch for the greater good.*

*To everyone who has offered support and encouragement and money, I am very grateful. To those who have volunteered, thank you. To Jeannette Reheuser, who has painstakingly kept the books and whipped me into shape for receipt details, thank you. And to Judith Mazza, who was willing to do this, even though it meant giving up two weeks at the Cape, Thanks.*

*There will always be future opportunities to serve and I hope that I will continue to have your support. The redistricting lines are probably going to court and it is possible that I may be running in a different district next year.*

*It is unfortunate that the Albany County Democratic Party, in its role as the redistricting committee, has again taken a shot against women. Some on the committee have admitted that it was no accident that Noelle Kinsch and I were pitted against one another. It is my hope that someday soon, openness, fairness, and honesty, rather than power grabs and manipulation, might become part of the workings of the local Democratic party.*

*I would also like to take this opportunity to call on the progressive Democratic community to come together. Someone from my past, Sister Margaret Collins, whom I greatly admired used to talk about people "pushing on bruises" rather than letting them heal. There's been a lot of "bruise pushing" from both the Ellis and Morris camps from the last mayoral campaign. No one was all right. No one was all wrong. Life is not that simple. It's time to end it and work together. Hopefully, what Noelle and I have done can be an example.*

*Finally, I want to thank George Infante. He's one of the honest people. We could all take a lesson from him. We'll miss him as he moves on to new adventures.*

*Sincerely,*

Maureen O'Brien



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1. Janis Gonzalez is my choice, I really like Janis.

At my insistence and with out resistance Janis Gonzalez sat with me and my family for two hours.

IMHO? Janis is an intelligent and principled Lady with out anyone but her conscious controlling her stand up moves.

And as a member of a middle class minority community I can relate best with Janis personally.

Go Janis...

Go Janis...

Comment by Voiceo'Reason — June 17th, 2011 @ [12:03 pm](#)

2. Brian Scavo was at my house and was told I signed a petition for Janis. In return, all he did was bash Janis, and my neighbors received the same treatment. That's because Brian's strategy is to target the Minority and disadvantaged community, as his old community has most people slamming the door on him. So good for Janis for stepping in and seeking me out and penetrating Brian's scheme.

That's why I'm going to give her some credit.

I don't know if Janis is ready today, but her message is clear that we as a community need to pay attention and make our presence known because the promises of yesterday's no longer lead to happy tomorrow's. She's right. I like this girl.

In return, I've never seen a candidate tell me that another option is a vote for Noelle Kinsch. She told my family, you may opt not to vote for me, but if you don't that she would only accept a vote for Noelle as an alternative, not Brian Scavo. This woman is not injuring progressives. I'm a progressive, a progressive Minority. I'm a Minority first. That conversation was SO IMPRESSIVE, and yes I will clearly pay attention to how Janis progresses.

And she also pointed that two people in my family have not voted in two years. Someone is doing research, it's my neighbor from two blocks over, and I like it.

Comment by Williams1978 — June 17th, 2011 @ [12:53 pm](#)

3. Janis can't win. Unfortunately because of this race, she will be seen as a spoiler. If Scavo wins, she'll be seen as the cause and will never get support again for any race. Just because you can run doesn't mean you should run.

Comment by upstate.ny.yankee — June 17th, 2011 @ [12:54 pm](#)

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4. Interesting perspective @upstate.ny.yankee – IDK, but it begs the question. Maybe because I'm a Minority does it mean that I should get in line because someone who feels what I feel shouldn't run?

Comment by Williams1978 — June 17th, 2011 @ [1:35 pm](#)

5. Janis will win in a landslide so stop the presses upstate.ny.yankee — And please take that machine thuggery out of our face. Don't tell us who can't win. My family will donate ten bucks to Janis for every machine hack that calls Janis a Spoiler.

Brian is the only spoiler in this race.

He spoiled our whole political atmosphere.

There are seven (7) votes in my house alone. And I promise you that's only a taste of the strong support coming together excited for Janis all ready. You should have been at last weeks cook out! There are several more I could name just on my block.

Janis is impressing every one she meets.

Janis will win and when she does she won't owe anyone any favors.

And as for Lawyer Kinsch? She should just pack it up.

The people don't want another lawyer.

The people want Janis.

Say it again!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UjsXo9l6I8>

Go Janis!

Go Janis!

Comment by Voiceo'Reason — June 17th, 2011 @ [1:36 pm](#)

6. No, Janis will not win in a landslide – totally ridiculous to suggest that and Janis is so down to earth that she would even say that to you, but I don't think that a landslide one way or another is her focus. Maybe we should focus on the landscape of our community, first, which eventually can lead to a landslide. Again, good for her for making me think about it.

Comment by Williams1978 — June 17th, 2011 @ [1:53 pm](#)

7. I lived in the 6th formerly 7th district for over 4 years. Prior to Scavo's last election all the way up through March 2011. I've been pretty heavily involved in the community and local political scene since long before then. And I've never heard of this Janis. And I'm not going to knock her person because I know NOTHING about her but I can tell you this, she does not have the manpower and the resources to run a campaign like Noelle. I doubt she'll raise \$10K in her whole campaign let alone on her first night of fundraising and she



certainly doesn't have tried and true progressive campaign warriors working for her. Noelle's staff have run campaigns for the likes of Tonko and Sheehan and her volunteers have been running progressives in Albany for over a decade. I have the greatest respect for Maureen O'Brien. Even more so because she was able to see that the most important thing in this election is to guarantee that Scavo doesn't win the primary and the best person to do that is the person with the most resources to make it happen. And I'm proud of both sides for putting their egos aside, sitting down at the table, and making this difficult decision. But this leaves me feeling like this Janis person is a little self indulgent and incapable of working towards the greater good. I mean where's the outreach and conversation? Where's the willingness to ensure that my own aspirations don't leave us stuck w/ a looney toon legislator? Not to mention my dear that Scavo only won by 11 votes last round and was almost outseated by a third party candidate. Why because progressive democrats fought to keep him out of office. Even if you win how are you going to stand up against the WFP line?

Comment by ezzykeegan — June 17th, 2011 @ [4:12 pm](#)

8. It's wonderful that Noelle Kinsch and Maureen O'Brien sat down at the table as ezzykeegan said. As a woman of color, I'm sure that Black wasn't part of that conversation because these guys don't speak for me. I'm sick and tired of Minorities being used as props. I didn't meet "this Janis" yet, but I'm deeply offended that someone would refer to her as "this Janis." I WILL MAKE SURE that I find her. This is one person she doesn't have to come looking for, and I'm going to get my church and denomination behind it.

Comment by Tonya411 — June 17th, 2011 @ [6:44 pm](#)

9. All you folks in 6 better quit playing race games. All of you. Because if you don't, you'll just wind up with another dose of Scavo. There are people in Albany County government-significant players- who may not publicly endorse Scavo, but who know how utterly predictable he is and how easy he is to manipulate. He's just the kind of legislator opportunistic control freaks love to have on the back bench... and I see you Delaware folks playing right into their hands.

Comment by Donald — June 17th, 2011 @ [7:23 pm](#)

10. @upstate, I have met Janis and find here refreshing. She is down to earth, independent and knowledgeable on the issues. That is what the voters want.

I think its appalling that someone would say "she" cannot win!!! Why not? Because the voters in the district won't give her a chance based on just her last name? Shouldn't you be so ashamed to live in such a district that your working your heart out to make sure race isn't a factor then? or are you part of the problem?

I hate to tell you that there was a young man with a "funny" name who everyone said would never win, especially against the the heir apparent (Hillary Clinton)... He is now the most powerful leader in the free world! She will energize the base and pull in so many voters just like he did who are tired of being told we must be chose this one or that one. "Si Se Puede" and "YES SHE CAN"!

Comment by Deeproller — June 17th, 2011 @ [7:45 pm](#)

11. Noelle Kinsch's long history of community involvement, professional legal experience and backing by neighborhood leaders makes her the top candidate in this race. If Ms. Gonzalez really cared about about ousting Mr. Scavo to the benefit of 6th District residents, she'd drop out and get behind Kinsch.

Comment by Eyes Wide Open — June 18th, 2011 @ [9:55 am](#)

12. You don't need an Army to win a legislative seat. Just be a good person who the people have an option to chose.

Take that Albany Lawyers machine intimidation away.  
Epic FAIL!

Janis will win because she is picking up new support every day. Its very early going. Your misinformation about Janis Gonzalez's is laughable.

I think it will soon be clear that Janis is the peoples choice.

Comment by FormerDemocrat — June 18th, 2011 @ [2:08 pm](#)

13. @Eyes Wide [Shut], "Get behind Kinsch"...Are we in America? Are you for real? That is the kind cronism and elitism that people (all people... white, blank, hispanic, democrat, or otherwise)are sick and tired of and WILL REJECT IN DROVES!

It would seem to me that you all are starting to give "Noelle" the kiss of death much like the fringe wierdos of the Tea Party did for Sarah Palin. Therefore, I encourage you to keep showing your true colors... just because your hiding behind "screen-names" doesn't mean your words are bringing into sharp focus your the true identity of your ideologies that compel you to support "Noelle's" candidacy.

So what the voters are suppose to only have two choices? One candidate who is pathological but backed by the old party bosses or the other by elitists disguised as "progressives" that think progressively when it comes to white women but not women of color?

Hmmm... which is worse: the the politically corrupt or the morally bankrupt!!!!"with supporters like you... who need an opponent"... Thank God Janis is another choice for the people who (as many of you said) has nothing to do with any of you!!!

Comment by Deeproller — June 18th, 2011 @ [7:21 pm](#)

14. @Tonya411, you can contact her at <http://www.voteforjanis.com> she has very responsive since I met her earlier this year... contact her there!!!

Comment by Deeproller — June 18th, 2011 @ [7:28 pm](#)

15. Click me and find out why Legisloser Scavo needs to go.

Have not met Janis but looks like she's getting my vote.

Voting two hispanics in one election in Albany, the world is coming to an end!

Lebron for County Exec because McCoy and his secret weapon, Don Clarey, want the brother to just disappear.

Janis because Noelle is just the same as always but Scavo is worse. Delaware Ave. laundrymats will be free!!!!

Comment by [AlbanyCommonSense](#) — June 18th, 2011 @ 7:49 pm

16. So as a woman I don't face minority issues? I'm sorry but Ms. Gonzalez has no real ties to the Albany Community. She owns property in the 6th where she stays when the legislature is in session for her job and then she returns to her other home in NYC. Her children do not attend local schools and she has never been involved in local issues. She is running because Albany's legislative seats were cut and there's a push to run minority candidates. Well I'm sorry but women are minorities too and being Latina does not necessarily make one the best candidate for the job. It may perhaps be a part of what makes one the best person to represent their constituency but it is not all there is to it.

@Tonya if Ms. Gonzalez had been involved in the local arena she would also have been invited to that conversation. Both Maureen and Noelle have been working diligently to put their legislative campaigns together for over a year. They thought they'd be running in different districts but instead were pitted against each other when the legislative lines were drawn. You can't have a 3 way primary and ensure that Scavo is out. Ms. Gonzalez made no effort to reach out to either of them or have that conversation. She doesn't care. She's running come hell or high water to make a statement to the county and not necessarily to the benefit of the 6th district or even minorities in general. To be a progressive candidate in the City of Albany means that you fight for the issues that affect the community including those of race and class.

The 6th district, although it encompasses some areas that are heavily populated by minorities and a number of areas that are populated by fairly economically disenfranchised households, by and large is made up of non-minority households living above the poverty line. That does not mean that issues of race and class should be dismissed. Its simply a census fact.

Not to mention the uphill battle of trying to get traditionally disenfranchised transient neighborhoods registered at their current address and out to vote on primary day is an uphill battle that minority candidates in this City have yet to win. I would love to see them outshine the upper wards but its never happened. And if we want to empower those who currently feel disempowered, we need to start by getting them to the polls.

It doesn't matter what color skin the representative has, what party they're in, or what their personal views are. It matters who their prime voters are. Like it or not when you pull the numbers from the Board of Elections, in the City of Albany, they are by and large wealthy and middle class homeowners, living in the upper wards, in traditionally non-minority neighborhoods, who vote straight down the Democrat line every year. You want change? Rally the troupes and shake it up!

But don't make it easy for a white man, with no actual full time job, who harrasses women and teenage girls, and who cares very little for anyone but himself has an easier time of winning a primary than he really should.



Comment by ezzykeegan — June 20th, 2011 @ [10:56 am](#)

17. Ezzy, women are not minorities so squash that. Walk around with my skin color and see what its like.

White regressives are as concerned with minority issues as Scavo is about becoming a priest. Being involved in the community and yielding NO RESULTS is as beneficial to us people of color as a carpet bagger from NYC. BTW, remember how Corey Ellis came into the political scene? That's right, carpt bagged to the Bronx and back again into Albany. You regressives voted for him anyway.

You regressives stood by 4 years ago and let Scavo steal the election from Lussier because it was good for the DEMOCRATIC PARTY! You deserve him.

I'm still voting for Gonzalez, Noelle has my vote if I think it will be close but Scavo has got to go.

Comment by [AlbanyCommonSense](#) — June 20th, 2011 @ [2:23 pm](#)

18. @Ezzy, as you say, "The 6th district, although it encompasses some areas that are heavily populated by minorities and a number of areas that are populated by fairly economically disenfranchised households, by and large is made up of non-minority households living above the poverty line."... That is why those of us who have been disenfranchised for so long will rally behind the people's candidate we see in Janis!!!

It seems like you are awfully personally preoccupied with the what you think is going on in the Gonzalez household...why? Don't you have your own home, family and bbusiness to look after?

Either way, we all know that people usually only try to throw mud on another person to hide their own or their friends dirt! So now he have me thinking... Maybe I need to dig a little into all the money equinox has gotten as from the County while your candidate has been the Board President and the deep pockets who funded her campaign with one event; not to mention the suspicious endorsement process which was purposely early so nooneelse could apply. Did it ever occur to you that is what turned of so many in the community?

Clearly you and Mrs. Kinsch see Janis as a real threat. Are you insinuating that the articulate and educated "latina" candidate (interesting you didnt say hispanic over latina which conotes an immigrant which Janis is not..you prejudice witch)is unable to appeal to "non-minority candidates livig above the poverty line"? or because Noelle is caucasian she cannot or should not try to compel those minority voters? Are you serious? Beyonce says Girls run the world but not just Maureen and Noelle...Sorry!!!! There are some Michelle Obamas, Jennifer Lopezes, Oprah Winfreys and even some Connie Chungs too!

I demand to here from Noelle to have her denouce all of yur elitist, racist, ethnically sexist and distorted views. If she does't then she must agree with then or think that is ok to sit silent and allow them to continue. I am to knwo if she feel the district is as racially polarized are you do and if so what she plans to do to change that! More importantly what she has already done to do that! I want to know if she supports the premise that janis cannot win because she is as seen by you and people like as a "latina"?

Its time for Noelle to call back her minions and speak up for herself!!!!

Comment by [deeproller69](#) — June 24th, 2011 @ [3:42 pm](#)

19. I don't think Scavo has my interests at heart. I also don't think he has minority or women's interest at heart.

I've met Noelle, I think she has the chops to be the best advocate for ALL the people in her ward. And although she's not in my ward, I wish her the best.

That said, my ward is represented by a middle aged, middle-class white guy, like me. But I've never heard anything about what he's done, nor what he will do to make the community a better place. But until someone else steps up to challenge, I guess I may never know him.

Convince me you're going to represent your constituents and do the right thing, and I don't care what race, sex, sexual preference, income, or favorite sports team is. Demographics of the candidate should not drive your vote, either.

Comment by [daleyplanit](#) — June 27th, 2011 @ [1:35 pm](#)

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